GACD Scale-up Webinar Summary

1. Introductions

GACD held two webinars on the 8th May 2018 for prospective researchers to the Scaling-up of evidence-based interventions at the population level for the prevention or management of hypertension and/or diabetes funding call. The webinars were well attended with over ninety participants dialling-in from around the world including Canada, Australia, USA, UK, Greece, Spain, Japan, Tanzania, South Africa, Argentina and India.

The webinars were hosted by Celina Gorre, the Executive Director of the GACD International Secretariat based in London, UK. Aaka Pande, Senior Health Economist from the World Bank joined to give an insight into implementation partners and several researchers currently working on GACD funded projects gave their perspective on being members of the GACD Researcher Network. These included Billie Bonevski, University of Newcastle, Australia, John Hurst, University College London, UK and Robert Schwartz, University of Toronto, Canada.

2. GACD Overview and Goals

The GACD began in 2007 and now has 14 member agencies, with over 900 researchers working on projects in 66 countries.

GACD funds creative and innovative research projects; specifically joint research with a focus on increasing its reach to stakeholders such as policy makers, government bodies and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). This latest funding call is the first time that GACD have focused on more than one disease type, focusing more on implementation of interventions.

3. Researcher Prospective

Billie Bonevski – Billie’s project (SISTAQUIT) is funded by the GACD lung diseases funding call and received funding just over a year ago. The project focuses on smoking cessation in pregnant women from the Aboriginal community in Australia. The project has over 30 sites and is very resource intensive. Billie has found that GACD has provided fantastic support through establishing the Researcher Network and giving researchers the opportunity to attend the Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) and connect and communicate with fellow researchers working in similar areas. The ASM brought together researchers, funders and policy makers in one room and is unique to GACD. Attending the ASM gave Billie the opportunity to establish new relationships with other researchers.

Robert Schwartz – Robert’s project is in its second year of funding from the GACD lung diseases call. He attended the ASM for the first time last year, in Buenos Aires, and found that researchers had learnt a lot from each other and were collaborating and publishing together. Robert helped with forming a new working group and made new connections with researchers in Canada, also working with indigenous communities, with the prospect of future collaborations.
John Hurst – John’s project is also part of the lung diseases funding call and has research sites across Peru, Uganda and Nepal. John stated that he thought there were two advantages to a GACD funded project 1 – you become part of the GACD ‘family’ and gain access to all the experience and support that this brings. 2 – your research project gains the added value of collaborating with GACD member agencies and researchers.

4. The Scaling-up Call

The scaling-up call is the fifth funding call from GACD and is the first to focus on implementation science rather than a specific disease. This allows the researchers to focus on what allows an intervention to be scaled up to a larger population.

Project proposals must involve an implementation partner. This could be a government, local government, municipality, charity, NGO or development bank.

Member agencies joining this funding call include:

- Medical Research Council, UK
- Ministry of Science, Technology and Productive Innovation, Argentina
- National Health and Medical Research Council, Australia
- Canadian Institutes of Health Research & International Development Research Centre, Canada
- Indian Council of Medical Research, India
- Agency for Medical Research and Development, Japan

The European Commission (EC) are also participating. However, their call for proposals has already closed in April 2018. Once identified successful researchers of EC projects will join the GACD Researchers Network.

Prospective researchers are encouraged to regularly check the GACD website as more member agencies are expected to join the funding call in the coming weeks.

Details of the eligibility criteria for different member agencies was not discussed during the webinars as this information is available on the GACD website ([https://www.gacd.org/funding/calls-for-proposals/gacd-scale-up-call](https://www.gacd.org/funding/calls-for-proposals/gacd-scale-up-call)). Prospective researchers are encouraged to refer to the GACD website and contact the relevant agencies.

Three member agencies are holding two stage processes:

**Canada:** 1\textsuperscript{st} Round deadline = 4\textsuperscript{th} July
Full application deadline = 10\textsuperscript{th} September

**Argentina:** 1\textsuperscript{st} round deadline = 15\textsuperscript{th} June
Applicants notified = 15\textsuperscript{th} July
Workshop for successful applicants = August
Full application deadline = 15\textsuperscript{th} October
Argentina will also be considering proposals on smoking cessation, myocardial infarction and stroke

**Australia:** 1\textsuperscript{st} round deadline = 15\textsuperscript{th} August
Full application deadline = TBC

All other agencies are holding a one stage application process with a deadline of the 10\textsuperscript{th} September.
The application for this funding call is unique as early and active engagement is required with an implementation partner. This funding call is also focused on research projects that target interventions at population levels.

5. World Bank Overview & Goals

The World Bank has a large portfolio of projects on Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) and has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with GACD to partner with researchers in order to evaluate these projects.

6. Questions

Can I apply as a Co-investigator to the UKMRC and as a Principal Investigator on another project submitted to another funder?

The UKMRC are happy to be flexible in such instances. The best option is to get in touch with the two funders and discuss.

To what extent are the implementation plans of the World Bank established?

There are further details on the PowerPoint slides uploaded to the GACD website and also lots of plans still in the pipeline.

Can an intervention be developed in the UK and then scaled up in another country e.g. India?

The UKMRC would be open to this idea but the researcher would need to make a compelling case in the proposal as to why this is. The UKMRC are not looking to fund UK based projects but projects collaborating with Indian researchers based in India.

What are the guidelines for first stage applications for funders with a two stage application process?

Researchers are advised to check the pages of the relevant funder or contact them directly for further information on what is required in the first stage of applications.

Will there be any avenue for US researchers?

Researchers are advised to check back on the GACD website regularly are more member agencies will be joining this funding call over the next few weeks.

For what purpose can the fund be used? Costs for analytic work (e.g., data collection, cleaning, validation, statistical analysis, etc.) seems self-evident, but how about the implementation (service) cost related to the intervention in question? Can it be covered? And if yes, is there a cap on how many % of the fund can be used for service cost?

The research funding is to be used exclusively for the research component of the project. The scale-up must be funded by the implementing partner. So, the proposed intervention will only be funded to the extent necessary for the research to take place. Once the evidence suggests that scale-up is warranted, the implementing partner must step in to fund the intervention.

How might a researcher tie their application into existing GACD expertise?

The best way to do that is to have a look at the researchers in the network through the GACD website, www.gacd.org. There you will find a list of projects, the researchers involved in each
project, countries they are working in, and the outcomes they are seeking. Check to see who might match up with the research you are wanting to conduct and contact them directly.

If a researcher applies to a funding agency with a two stage call (e.g. Australia NMRC), and are unsuccessful at the first stage, are they then able to apply via another funding agency which has a September deadline?

If the proposal is significantly altered and assuming you meet the eligibility criteria for the second funding agency, then this is fine. It will be put through the second agency’s review process along with the other applications.